ANTHROPOLOGY OF AFRICA (070:243:01)
SPRING 2024
Tues/Thurs 2:00-3:20 PM, BIO 205 – New Brunswick

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This course offers an overview of the anthropology of Africa, contextualizing the field within the European colonial projects of the early twentieth-century. While colonial administrations had practical uses for ethnographic data about African societies, early anthropologists believed that the study of small-scale African societies revealed information about humanity's past and the essence of human nature.

Over time, the critique of colonialist anthropology engendered new approaches and orientations within the discipline, and critique continues to shape the discipline. Researchers have aimed to understand the world through others' perspectives, reflect on power dynamics of the ethnographic encounter, and identify the drivers of societal and cultural change. The core methods of ethnography, involving cultural immersion, interviews, and participant observation, have persisted through time.

We will focus on a variety of ethnographic studies that illuminate aspects of social life throughout the continent. Contemporary studies offer insight into the evolution of the discipline of anthropology, as much as they reveal the unfolding transformations of social life in Africa. Our weekly themes cover politics, economic systems, kinship, gender, religion, human-animal relations, food, health and medicine, urban youth culture, and migration.

CORE LEARNING GOALS

The Anthropology of Africa fulfills Historical Analysis (HST) and Social Analysis (SCL) course requirements of the Core Curriculum. Both of these goals are integral to the course content. However, for the purpose of assessment, midterm and final exam questions will address the HST goals; while your film project will incorporate the SCL goals.

Historical and Analysis [HST] (3 credits)
Students must take one degree credit-bearing course that meets one or both of these goals.

- HST-1. Explain the development of some aspect of a society or culture over time.
- HST-2. Employ historical reasoning to study human endeavors, using appropriate assumptions, methods, evidence, and arguments.

Social Analysis [SCL] (3 credits)
Students must take one additional degree credit-bearing course that meets one or both of these goals.

- SCL-1. Understand different theories about human culture, social identity, economic entities, political systems, and other forms of social organization.

- SCL-2. Employ tools of social scientific reasoning to study particular questions or situations, using appropriate assumptions, methods, evidence, and arguments.

COURSE OBJECTIVES:

1) Students will demonstrate knowledge of anthropology's relationship to colonialism in Africa.
2) Students will demonstrate knowledge of how anthropological methods and social theories evolved in Africa over time in response to critiques of colonialism and its legacies.
3) Students will demonstrate an understanding of the insights and constraints of various anthropological methods used in Africa over time with respect to key concepts.
4) Students will demonstrate an understanding of key conceptual themes studied by anthropologists of Africa (e.g. gender, political systems, kinship, human-animal relations, health) though "graphic ethnography" projects.

GRADING

Weekly reading quizzes: 15%
Midterm exam: 25%
Discussion leading: 10%
Final exam (non-cumulative): 25%
Graphic Ethnography group project: 15%
Attendance and Participation: 10%

- Final grades are calculated in Canvas.
- The course grade will reflect the percentage weights given to each grade category. (The final grade is NOT the average of all the grades or points you received in the course.)
- There WILL BE an extra credit opportunity.
- Borderline grades will NOT be bumped up for the final grade.

WEEKLY READING RESPONSES
Every week, students will complete a short quiz in Canvas based on the readings. The quiz must be completed before Thursday's class.

DISCUSSION LEADING
For each week's readings, students will be selected in advance to summarize one of the texts and pose 3-4 discussion questions to the class.

MIDTERM EXAM
The midterm will be open book and administered in Canvas. It will cover readings, films, and lectures. It will consist of short answers and a few objective questions.

FINAL EXAM
The final exam is non-cumulative and will include a longer essay question. It will be administered on Canvas.

CLASS ATTENDANCE/PARTICIPATION

Roll will be taken each class period, and attendance counts! Please come to class prepared to discuss the readings. When student discussion leaders are asking the class questions, it is expected that you will contribute to the conversation.

GRAPHIC ETHNOGRAPHY GROUP PROJECT

Students will work in small groups to translate into comic-strip format an aspect of life in Africa that conveys information about belief, practice, social organization, and/or cultural change. The group may choose any country, and the information "translated" into graphic form may come from a text or film we have covered in class. Steps of the process include: 1) the selection of a theme for your graphic ethnography; 2) the selection of a cultural group you will focus on; 3) roles for group members (story development; the art; evaluation of content; presentation of the work). Strong artistic ability is not required, and you can have more than one person for any of the roles. The art may be hand-drawn or digital. The important thing is that cultural information is presented in a compelling, visually interesting way, and that the reader will learn the "why, where, what, how, and who" of the chosen theme. The project will be presented to the class via slide show (either one image projected that shows the comic-strip and is explained by the group; and/or a slide show broken up into separate images and explained).

POLICIES

MISSED ASSIGNMENTS or TESTS:

Missed exams, quizzes, and/or assignments require either that a student arranges a makeup date no longer than 1 week after due date unless legitimate documentation for an illness or other emergency is given to professor.

PLAGIARISM and INDEPENDENT WORK**:**

Students are advised to re-read the university policies on Academic Integrity (find link in the course on Blackboard). Cheating, fabrication, and plagiarism (submitting someone else's written, fully or partially, as one's own) will not be tolerated, and this includes using or adapting someone else's work for a take-home exam or for course notes. It also includes using one of your papers from a different course to submit for the current course. Such actions will result in a failing grade for the assignment and could result in a failing grade for the course and disciplinary action by the university administration.

Forms of plagiarism include the following scenarios:

◦ You find some else's written work or video and submit it as your own paper/film/response.
◦ You pay a service or individual to do classwork for you and submit it as your own.
◦ You use a portion of an article, radio or TV show, book, internet paper, etcetera, without giving a citation for the work and therefore implying the text is your own.
◦ You use all or a portion of someone else's film/writing as your own.
◦ You find an article or research paper and paraphrase its argument or ideas in your own words without offering a citation, and then you submit ideas as your own.
◦ You cobble together a paper (or video) from other sources without citation and without substantively changing the wording or content and present it as your own idea.

EMAIL ETIQUETTE

Please feel free to email Prof. Sodikoff with any questions, but when doing so, please note your full name. RU email addresses do not always show it.

USE OF TECHNOLOGY DURING CLASS

You are highly encouraged to take notes by hand in a notebook. If you use a computer, iPad, or phone, in class for non-course-related purposes, you will be asked to put it away for the rest of the class period, and possibly for the rest of the semester.

READING ASSIGNMENTS

Weekly quizzes will be posted in Canvas

****Two discussion leaders will be assigned each week****

WEEK 1 (1/16-1/18): THE CONCEPT OF AFRICA

Naa Baako Ako-Adjei, Naa Baako. 2015. "How Not to Write About Africa: African Cuisines in Food Writing." *Gastronomica*, Vol. 15(1): 44-55.

WEEK 2: COLONIAL BEGINNINGS

Morton, Christopher. 2020. "Introduction: Photographs are to Think With." In *The Anthropological Lens: Rethinking E.E. Evans-Pritchard*. Oxford University Press. Pp. 1-35.

WEEK 3: REFECTIONS ON 'HUMAN NATURE'

Evans-Pritchard, E. "The Notion of Witchcraft Explains Unfortunate Events."

Turnbull, Colin. 1973. "Human Nature and Primal Man." *Social Research* 40(3): 511-530.

WEEK 4: PERCEIVING THE WORLD THROUGH ANOTHER LENS

Shostak, Marjorie. 2000. *Nisa: The Life and Words of a !Kung Woman*. "Introduction." Pp. 1-40.

To starting thinking about how to approach a graphic ethnography, skim through the text: "Graphic Ethnography." *Anthropology News*, Print Edition (Aug. 2021).

WEEK 5: IDIOMS OF CULTURAL CHANGE

Ashforth, Adam. 2014. "When the Vampires Come for You." *Social Research* 81(4): 851-882.

WEEK 6: RELIGIOUS BELIEF

Janson, Marloes. 2016. "How, for God's sake, can I be a good Muslim?: Gambian youth in search of a moral lifestyle." *Ethnography* Vol.17 (1), p.22-46

Nweke, Kizito Chinedu. 2019. "The Renaissance of African Spiritualities vis-à-vis Christianity: Adopting the Model of Mutual Enrichment." *Studies in Religion* 48)2): 237-257.

WEEK 7: MAKING A LIVING/ MIDTERM (2/29/24)

Dua, Jatin. "Dhow Encounters." *Transition* 119, Afro-Asian Worlds. 49-59.

Santos, Janine Patricia. 2023. "'We deserve new things': (anti-)bricolage in Lome's makerspaces." *Africa* 93: 496-521.

MIDTERM WILL BE POSTED ON CANVAS

WEEK 8 (3/5-3/7): KINSHIP RELATIONS

Akanle, Olayinka and Adesina, Jimi O. 2017. "International Migrants' Remittances and Kinship Networks in Nigeria: The Flip-Side Consequences. *Journal of Anthropological Research* 73(1): 66-91.

9. GENDER

Hodgson, Dorothy L. 1999. "Once Intrepid Warriors": Modernity and the Production of Maasai Masculinities. *Ethnology* 38(2): 121-150.

Reid, Graeme. 2003. "'It Is Just a Fashion!' Linking Homosexuality and 'Modernity' in South Africa." *Etnofoor*, Fashions and Hypes 16(2): 7-25.

WEEK 10: SPRING BREAK

11. THE SYMBOLISM OF FOOD

Neely, Abigail. 2021. *Hlonipha* and Health: Ancestors, Taboos and Social Medicine in South Africa. Africa 91(3): 473-492.

12. YOUTH AND URBAN CULTURE

Fredericks, Rosalind. 2013. "'The Old Man is Dead!' Hip Hop and the Arts of Citizenship of Senegalese Youth." *Antipode* Vol. 46 No. 1: 130–148

Cole, Jennifer. 2004. "Fresh Contact in Tamatave, Madagascar: Sex, Money, and Intergenerational Transformation." American Ethnologist 31(4): 573-588.

WEEK 13. ENVIROMENTAL DEGRADATION & BIODIVERSITY LOSS

Tadie, Degu and Fischer, Anke. 2013. "Hunting, Social Structure and Human—Nature Relationships in Lower Omo, Ethiopia: People and Wildlife at a Crossroads." *Human Ecology* 41(3): 447-457.

Livingston, Julie. 2021. "Water Scarcity and Health in Urban Africa. *Daedalus* 150(4): 85-102.

WEEK 14: CROSS-MIGRATIONS

Lan, Shanshan. 2019. "Reconstructing Blackness in Grassroots Interactions Between Chinese and Africans in Guangzhou." *Anthropological Quarterly* 92 (2): 481-508

Sheridan, Derek. 2018. "'If You Greet Them, They Ignore You': Chinese Migrants, (Refused) Greetings, and the Interpersonal Ethics of Global Inequality in Tanzania." *Anthropological Quarterly* 91(1): 237-265.

WEEK 15 (4/23-4/25): GROUP PROJECT PRESENTATIONS

FINAL EXAM: posted on Canvas on the day of the scheduled final exam.